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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO USAID DAA LEN ROGERS; GENEVA FOR
RMA

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TAGS: [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [EAID](#) [AF](#) [PK](#) [USEU](#) [BRUSSELS](#)

SUBJECT: A/S DEWEY BILAT WITH AFGHAN DELEGATION

11. (U) Summary. On February 15, PRM Assistant Secretary Gene Dewey held a bilateral meeting with the Afghan delegation to the EU-UNHCR co-chaired Strategic Consultations on Refugees and Population Movements to and from Afghanistan (septel). A/S Dewey sought Refugee Minister Dadfar's views on progress and his ministry's coordination with other ministries and international actors in Afghanistan. Dadfar stated that coordination within the GOA, with UNHCR, and with Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) was effective. He stressed the need for an emergency fund within his ministry in order to quickly respond to crises. He also outlined his plan to distribute plots of land for houses to 500,000 families over five years. A/S Dewey noted that the Afghan Conservation Corps (ACC) might be valuable in supporting this program. Deputy Finance Minister Shahrani emphasized the need for capacity building within the GOA. A/S Dewey expressed optimism over the progress to date and encouraged Dadfar to share his views with the donor community.

12. (U) Summary continued: The U.S. delegation consisted of PRM A/S Arthur E. (Gene) Dewey; Leonard Rogers, Deputy Assistant Administrator, USAID; Steven McGann, Director, PRM; Susan Anton, PRM Afghan Program Officer; William Schofield, Refugee Coordinator, Embassy Kabul; Norman Hastings, Refugee Coordinator, Embassy Islamabad; Marc Mezner, Refugee and Migration Affairs Officer, USEU; and Patricia Manso, Advisor for Humanitarian Assistance, USAID, USEU. End Summary.

13. (U) On February 15, PRM Assistant Secretary Gene Dewey held a bilateral meeting with the Afghan delegation to the EU-UNHCR co-chaired Strategic Consultations on Refugees and Population Movements to and from Afghanistan. PRM A/S Gene Dewey met with GOA Minister for Refugees Azam Dadfar and Deputy Finance Minister Wahidullah Shahrani on February 15 in Brussels. Also in attendance were USAID DAA Leonard Rogers, Embassy Islamabad Refugee Coordinator Norman Hastings, Embassy Kabul Refugee Coordinator William Schofield, and Patricia Manso of USAID Brussels. Dewey opened the meeting by asking about the relationship of the Ministry of Refugees within the GOA and with international actors in Afghanistan. Dadfar explained that his ministry had good working relations with the army, police, and relevant ministries within the GOA, especially Finance, Rural Development, Urban Housing, and Tribal and Frontier Affairs. Outside the GOA, Dadfar noted good relationships with the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and agreed with A/S Dewey on the need to improve security, highlighting the southeast, and on the need to assist with emergencies. Dadfar was not aware of the Refugee Return Committee established two years ago to help with returns of Pashtuns. He said, however, that his field offices could go to most areas where refugees had returned, including returnees from camps in Waziristan that were closed by the Pakistani government in 2004.

14. (U) Dadfar said relations with UNHCR were excellent. He cited frequent meetings and said that UNHCR had placed two advisors in the ministry and that the ministry's 34 field offices cooperated effectively with UNHCR's offices. Dadfar said that this winter was a good example of strong cooperation with UNHCR as they worked together to address the needs of 1600 families living in tent cities in Kabul.

15. (U) Dadfar outlined two major initiatives. He said he hoped to distribute over 500,000 plots of land over five years to families to build homes. President Karzai supports the plan. A/S Dewey suggested that the ACC might be useful in providing cash-for-work programs while the houses were being built.

16. (U) Dadfar stressed the need for his ministry to have an emergency fund so that he could respond more quickly to crises. He offered the current winter emergency as an example. (Note: PRM and OFDA recently have contributed to the IFRC for winterization needs in Afghanistan). He added that donors should provide support directly to ministries. Dadfar said that there were some tensions with NGOs, which revolved around salary differences and the perception that aid channeled through NGOs might hold back development of local capacity.

17. (U) Both Dadfar and Deputy Finance Minister Shahrani highlighted the need for capacity building and institutional development. Shahrani said there were too many employees in

the ministry, but the GOA was starting to improve its hiring procedures and would open training centers in ministries. He added that the Finance Ministry would offer technical assistance to certain ministries. A/S Dewey applauded this initiative and encouraged its implementation. He also asked about revenue collection. Shahrani replied that it had gotten better. He explained that the Finance Ministry provided support and could offer policy suggestions and ask for specific operations. However, the Ministry of Interior controlled the customs and police.

18. (U) USAID DAA Rogers explained that USAID would focus on the social sector, especially education and health. He described economic growth as the key to reintegration of the approximately 170,000 internally displaced people. Dadfar stressed that land would be an incentive to return. A/S Dewey closed the meeting by noting progress and encouraging Dadfar to make other donors aware of his plans and proposals.

(PRM/ANE has cleared this cable.)

McKinley

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